

VZCZCXRO8199
PP RUEHAG RUEHDF RUEHIK RUEHLZ RUEHROV RUEHSL RUEHSR
DE RUEHBS #1168/01 2331253
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 211253Z AUG 09
FM USEU BRUSSELS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAFCC/FCC WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 001168

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FCC FOR WEISLER
DOC FOR NTIA - ALEXANDER, SENE
STATE FOR EUR/ERA, EB/CIP - NESTER, EB/IPE
PLEASE PASS TO USTR

NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EINT](#) [ECPS](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: KEY EU STATES SEEK GRADUAL INTERNET GOVERNANCE EVOLUTION

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Officials from the Swedish EU Presidency, Germany and France told USEU in July they favor gradual, modest evolution in Internet governance, and said a June European Commission call for major changes in and internationalization of Internet governance was "extreme" and "goes too far." The officials said they do not favor UN oversight of ICANN, the non-profit corporation currently charged with assignment of Internet top-level domain names, and said most of their concerns regarding Internet governance can be met via stronger ICANN accountability. They welcomed the upcoming talks with the USG in Washington September 1 on the future of ICANN. END SUMMARY.

NEW EU MANDATE FOR INTERNET GOVERNANCE DISCUSSIONS

¶2. (SBU) EU governments have agreed new guidelines for use by current EU Presidency Sweden in bilateral and multilateral discussions on Internet Governance. The guidelines were agreed by the Member States' Permanent Representatives (ambassadors) to the EU at a meeting on Friday, July 16th.

¶3. (SBU) USEU met with officials from the Swedish (Jrgen Samuelsson), French (Romain Bonenfant), and German (Frank Goebbels) PermReps in mid-July. Based on feedback from these meetings, it appears likely that the guidelines are less controversial and far-reaching than the policy statements made over the last few months by EU Information Society and Media Commissioner Vivian Reding.

¶4. (SBU) The Commission issued a press release (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/951&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>) and Communication (http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/internet_gov/docs/communication/comm2009_277_fin_en.pdf) on Internet Governance in June. In addition, in a video address (http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/reding/video/20090504/index_en.htm), Commissioner Reding publicly called for the severing of the relationship between the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN - the California-based non-profit responsible for assigning Internet top-level domain names and overseeing many aspects of Internet functions) and the Department of Commerce after ICANN's existing agreement with DOC expires September 30. Reding raised the idea of establishing a G-12 group of countries to exert oversight over ICANN's work.

¶5. (SBU) The Swedish, German and French reps said they perceive the Commission positions to be "extreme", and have been at pains to distance their governments from the Commissioner in this regard. They stressed their unhappiness with the Communication, emphasizing that the Commission does not have competence in Internet Governance. (Note: Samuelsson has an extensive background in Internet governance

issues. End note).

¶6. (SBU) The Member State officials were in consensus that the way forward on Internet governance is "evolution, not revolution". Bonenfant said he thought the French government's position had changed significantly over the last few years, and was now much closer to the USG's position. Bonenfant and Goebbels both rejected the idea of UN oversight of ICANN, with a role for regimes potentially hostile to Internet openness. Goebbels said concerns over ICANN can be fixed with stronger accountability; both officials said the ICANN Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) should be strengthened.

¶7. (SBU) Bonenfant said Member States are concerned over ICANN's planned expansion of top level domain names (e.g. .god) to allow private domains in 2010; "there needs to be a good conflict-resolution mechanism in place, and can California law (which governs ICANN) resolve such issues?" Both Bonenfant and Goebbels said Member States do favor more sovereign nation control over country code top level national domain names (ccTLDs - e.g. .uk).

¶8. (SBU) The EU's Troika (the Swedish and upcoming Spanish Presidencies, plus the Commission) will be meeting with NTIA's new Assistant Secretary, Lawrence Strickling, on September 1st in Washington, to discuss Internet governance issues.

BACKGROUND

¶9. (SBU) Over the past few years, the European Commission has consistently pushed for reform of Internet governance. The EU has

BRUSSELS 00001168 002 OF 002

been uncomfortable with the existing contractual relationship between ICANN and the USG (DOC) in particular, and pushed hard at the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) for a different system that includes "international, governmental accountability." The 2005 WSIS established the Internet Governance Forum, a non-binding multilateral forum, which has met annually to discuss Internet issues. EU activity on Internet governance then died down until this Spring, when Ms. Reding's statements and the Communication revived the issue.

MURRAY